Many kids are exposed to too much noise. Over time, exposure to excessive noise can cause hearing loss. Hearing loss from too much noise—called noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL)—may be hardly noticeable at first. Once lost, however, hearing cannot be restored.

As the world gets louder, noises compete with each other. For example, think of a common scene in a home kitchen. If the dishwasher is running, you might increase the volume on the kitchen TV to hear it better. Add a blender and garbage disposal, and your spouse might turn the TV volume up even more. If the phone rings, you have to turn up the headset volume to be heard over the TV. Then your son and daughter turn up their headsets to hear their music or video games over the noise around them.

The design of today’s restaurants is making them far noisier than they once were. Hard surfaces like glass, metal, concrete, and polished wood reflect sound and amplify noise. Some restaurant owners use these materials because it makes the place sound lively. Others use them because they encourage people to eat faster, allowing more parties to be seated at the same table during the dining period.

**Protect Yourself & Your Family**

Whether you prefer classical, jazz, rock, pop, hip hop, or even bagpipe music, concerts are also sources of potentially damaging noise. A symphony orchestra playing at peak volume can easily reach 100 decibels, and certain brass and percussion instruments have registered 130 to 140 decibels at close range. The music at a pop concert typically maintains a fairly constant level of 110
decibels. If the fans are screaming, the noise can register at 115 to 120 decibels! That’s roughly as loud as an ambulance siren!

Consider other common sources of noise like leaf blowers, home entertainment systems, movie theaters, and traffic. Not all exposure to loud noise can be prevented, but when the noise is too loud for too long a time, a little effort to protect your hearing and your children’s hearing can go a long way.

Tips For Creating A Quiet Home

You can create a quiet home in three ways:

1. Reduce noises at the source.
2. Avoid competing noises in the same area.
3. Make your family aware of noise sources, noise levels, and how to avoid unsafe noise levels.

Here are some practical tips for creating a quiet home:

✔ Set your television, video games, and music to the lowest volume at which they can be heard clearly. If someone in the room has trouble hearing, consider turning on your television captioning rather than turning up the volume.

✔ Create ways to muffle the noise of chores. An example is to close the door between family members and appliances in use, such as those in a workshop or laundry room.

✔ Buy quiet toys. If you buy electronic toys, choose those with volume controls, and use only the lowest volume setting. This will both lower your household noise levels and help protect your child from NIHL.

✔ When buying certain appliances, such as a fan, range hood, or dishwasher, ask about its noise rating. Some ratings are given in “sones”: the lower the sone number, the quieter the unit.

✔ If your home is in a particularly noisy location, work to keep outdoor noises outdoors. Caulk cracks around windows and doors. Insert putty or expanding foam around pipes and wires where they enter the house.

✔ Close windows and doors against potentially harmful sounds, such as leaf blowers, lawn mowers, power tools, and sirens.

✔ Use soft furnishings to soften noise indoors. The more cushions, curtains, and wall coverings you have, the more noise will be absorbed.

✔ Place carpets and area rugs over hard flooring to help soak up sound. Thicker rugs are more effective at reducing noises that bounce off of hard surfaces.

By taking just a few simple steps, you can achieve a home that is filled with only safe, peaceful sounds.